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AUTHOR Pratt, Corny
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ABSTRACT

Three news magazines ("Time," "Newsweek," and "U.S. News and World Report") and three opinion magazines ("The Nation," "The New Republic," and "National Review") were assessed with regard to their coverage of Africa. Analysis of the magazines' contents indicated that, on an overall basis, their treatment of Africa showed more similarities than differences. Their coverage of Africa was determined to be minimal, to focus disproportionately on news about violence, and to project a negative image of Africa as a "baby continent" struggling against massive problems and dependent on the dictates of the high-ranking nations. (GW)

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THE REPORTAGE AND IMAGES OF AFRICA IN SIX U.S.
NEWS AND OPINION MAGAZINES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

A paper presented to the International Communication Division, Association for Education in Journalism Convention, University of Wisconsin-Madison, August 21-24, 1977.

Corny Pratt, Graduate Student, School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Minnesota.

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Introduction

'Foreign news' is a misnomer. In this interdependent world, we are affected by almost any event anywhere. International news is not foreign; it is local, it is immediate, it is highly relevant to the nation and to the people.

-- Lester Markel
Founder
International Press Institute
1976.

The verity of the above quotation has two basic implications for the current nature of international news flow: the seeming inferior status of some foreign news material in national and international media systems, and the need to attach greater importance to attempts at decimating the deleterious imbalance in news flow between nations.

Lester Markel is not alone in making this call, and, thus, tacitly expressing the need for restructuring the content of the international news system. Hachten,¹ Schramm,² and Hester,³ inter alios, remarked that there has been the consistent domination of the international media systems by the high-rank nations. Also, the

¹ William A. Hachten, Muffled Drums: The News Media in Africa (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1971), p. 51.

² Wilbur Schramm, Mass Media and National Development (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1964), p. 65 and passim.

³ Al Hester, "International Information Flow," in Heinz-Dietrich Fischer and John Calhoun Merrill (eds.) International and Intercultural Communication (New York: Hastings House, 1975), pp. 244-48.

International Press Institute in its 1953 report, The Flow of the News, recommended, inter alia, that there should be (1) more pictorial content in newspapers, (2) better physical representation of foreign news in newspapers, (3) more accurate reporting, (4) better written news, and (5) more emphasis on human interest news.⁴

Steinberg, in a testament to the disheartening trend in the international news systems, wrote:

International news reporting is critical to the formation of intelligent public opinion about foreign policy. To avoid covering it adequately in the conviction that the viewer is not interested is to assume the position that the commercial broadcaster has taken toward programming: the public gets what it wants. In broadcast news, however, as in print journalism, there is a public need to be informed about foreign events. Occurrences abroad affect and influence the social and political processes in this country. If our satellites can carry accounts of sports and royal weddings, surely they can always convey international news. The people's right to know does not stop at the shores of the United States.

The plain truth is that coverage of international news by both the press and television is totally inadequate.⁵

The weight of this statement is buttressed by the fact that its writer was a CBS-TV Vice-President, a position that accorded him the authenticity and credibility of the horse's mouth.

⁴

The Flow of the News, Zurich: International Press Institute, 1953, p. 65 and passim.

⁵

Charles Steinberg; "Are the Networks Giving Enough Time to Foreign News?" TV Guide, May 7-13, 1977, p. A-4.

All these exhortations notwithstanding, there has been the emphasized trend of "big power" news in international news systems, with an increasing emphasis on "hard news."

Adams, for example, in a qualitative study of 1,521 domestic and foreign news leads on the Associated Press TA wire for afternoon dailies, found that foreign dateline stories dealt significantly more often than domestic stories with hard news.⁶

The phenomenon of imbalanced international news flow no longer seems surprising to international communication researchers as they have frequently intimated themselves with, and advanced to new heights, the efficacy of the antecedent role played by the "pecking order" variable in ascertaining the nature, extent, and routing of news flow between nations. Regarding television, Varis reported that the global trafficking of American TV programs may be rightly construed not as a cultural exchange, but as an invasion of other countries. According to this study, there are only five countries in the world -- Mainland China, North Korea, North Vietnam, Albania, and Mongolia -- who do not broadcast U.S. programs.⁷ In another study, Read makes bold the parochialism in global television flow, pointing out that "the basic global flow of television programming is among eight rich countries because those eight have most of the receivers and the largest audiences."⁸

⁶ John B. Adams, "A Qualitative Analysis of Domestic and Foreign News on the AP TA Wire," Gazette, 10:4 (1964), pp. 285-95.

⁷ Tapio Varis. "Global Traffic in Television," Journal of Communication, 24:1 (Winter 1974), pp. 102-109.

⁸ William H. Read, "Global TV Flow: Another Look," Journal of Communication, 26:3 (Summer 1976), p. 72.

The new character assumed by media systems -- consequent upon improved technology -- and the unprecedented emphasis on the study of international communication, more so its functional aspects, are yet to bear their much-needed fruits. Although there has been, over the years, heightened scholarly inputs into international communication, the proliferation of international and regional communication arrangements (Intelsat, Eurovision, Intervision, Arabvision, Asiavision, the news agencies, etc., and their supra-territorial mimetic effects), the increasing use of the media for socialization, and a growing recognition of their nonpareil potentialities for influencing the "mass mind," very little change seems reflected in the structure of international news.

It should be expected that such improvements reduce, in no small way, the problems attendant on the international news reporting scene more so as it is now common knowledge among scholars and students of communications that the unfairness in the intrinsic dynamics and functionalism of the news systems with particular reference to the Third World nations does present veritable threats to a supposedly free market place of ideas wherein the readership clientele is given a broad range of reports, not just crisis news. The need for such diversity in news and views is propitiously called for in view of the new capabilities the media have acquired, and the expanding roles they now perform.

A problem of international communication, the methodological approach to solving it has attracted little, if any, consensus. Should the foreign news content of the media be increased?

Nichols, for instance, failed to verify any significant correlation between greater emphasis on foreign news in the American mass media and greater interest in international news topics by audience members. Despite this failure, Nichols and his research team were overly optimistic that, with proper methodology, the shortcomings of their experiment may be removed and a working relationship between increased international news coverage and increased reader interest established.⁹

While this excruciating problem remains largely unresolved, it seems apparent that international communication as a relatively nascent discipline is making a leap through a twilight zone, and it is also making its significance increasingly paramount. But such a bid, perhaps expectantly, is fraught with problems. Lindsay, for example, in making a case for the scientific "refinancing," reformulation, and remodification of the scope and methods of communications on the international plane, declares:

. . . we are in a transitional phase in the evolutionary growth of the study of mass communication, construed for discussion purposes as a quasi-discipline, and that we must therefore be wary of accepting too quickly and too uncritically the glib assumptions promoted as verities by articulate propagandists for the notion that research in this field is a convenient instrumentality of political and economic intrigue.¹⁰

John Spicer Nichols, "Increasing Reader Interest in Foreign News by Increasing Foreign News Content in Newspaper: An Experimental Test," *Gazette*, 21:4 (1975), pp. 231-37.

Robert Lindsay, "Mass Communication Research: The International Prospect," Paper presented to the 11 Simposio Internacional de le Comunicacion, Instituto Tecnolico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey, Mexico (1976), p. 2.

However, within the last decade, research has unveiled new strengths of the media, one of which is agenda-setting. This function, researched by Benton and Frazier,¹¹ McLeod, Becker, and Bryner,¹² McCombs and Shaw,¹³ and Tipton, Haney, and Basehart,¹⁴ inter alios, focussed its germinal strengths on the mass media vis-à-vis the politicization of their audiences, but it is now being evaluated in other spheres of media roles. It asserts that the media, by choosing certain themes and emphasizing them, create a hierarchy of salience of issues in their audience. In other words, the audience accepts as important those themes that receive frequent in-depth treatment by the media.

Cohen sees the press, indeed the media, as performing more than simply setting the agenda. He says that for the "foreign policy audience, the really effective political map of the world -- that is to say,

¹¹ Marc Benton and Jean Frazier, "Agenda Setting Function of the Mass Media at Three Levels of Information Holding," Communication Research, 3:3 (1976), pp. 261-74.

¹² Jack McLeod, et. al., "Another Look at the Agenda-Setting Function of the Press," Paper presented to the Association for Education in Journalism, Ft. Collins, Colorado, 1973.

¹³ Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw, "The Agenda-Setting Function of the Mass Media," Public Opinion Quarterly, 36:2 (Summer 1972), pp. 176-87.

¹⁴ Leonard Tipton, et. al., "Media Agenda-Setting in City and State Election Campaigns," Journalism Quarterly, 52:1 (Spring 1975), pp. 15-22.

their operational map of the world -- is drawn by the reporter and the editor, not by the cartographer."¹⁵ Cohen explains it thus:

. . . the press is significantly more than a purveyor of information and opinion. It may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about. And it follows from this that the world looks different to different people, depending not only on their personal interests, but also on the map that is drawn for them by the writers, editors, and publishers of the papers they read. . . . The editor may believe he is only printing the things that people want to read, but he is thereby putting a claim on their attention, powerfully determining what they will be thinking about, and talking about, until the next wave laps ashore.¹⁶

Lang and Lang describe this function in a similar vein: "The mass media force attention to certain issues. . . . They are constantly presenting objects suggesting what individuals in the mass should think about, know about, have feelings about."¹⁷

While the authenticity of this media role on national issues has been widely accepted and felt, it is pertinent to note that its influence has spread to the international front. Audiences depend on international news columns and broadcasts for the perception of their "external publics," and impressions received therefrom, as the function of the agenda-setting efforts of the media, form the major corpus of the international image-building process. And so cardinal

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Bernard C. Cohen, The Press and Foreign Policy (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 13.

¹⁶

Ibid.

¹⁷

Kurt Lang and Gladys Engel Lang, "The Mass Media and Voting," in Bernard Berelson and Morris Janowitz (eds.), Reader in Public Opinion and Communication (New York: Free Press, 1966), p. 468.

to the image of nations is media content that foreign policy decisions have been known to have been formulated in large measure through an evaluation of informational materials that make their way through the complex paraphernalia of satellite communication systems, key board consoles, etc., to most of the world. As Hester points out:

. . . information may flow directly to national decision makers, but at other times the incoming information may disseminate to the general population or to special or attentive publics interested in certain types of messages from the external environment. The general public or attentive publics may attempt with varying degrees of success to influence national policy in foreign affairs, based upon the information which they have received.¹⁸

So, while mass media roles have graduated from their traditional functions as purveyors of vital information and as catalytic agents in the change process, the onus of crystallizing public opinion lies on them, for, as Bogart puts it, "it is inconceivable for a 'public opinion' to exist in a society into which there is no means of injecting new ideas and information on a massive scale."¹⁹ Thus, without any modicum of doubt, the content of the international news media is crucial to the knowledgeability and understanding of the world at large, and, ipso facto, spells the tune of international relations. A generalized schematic representation of the inward flow of international news is given on the next page.

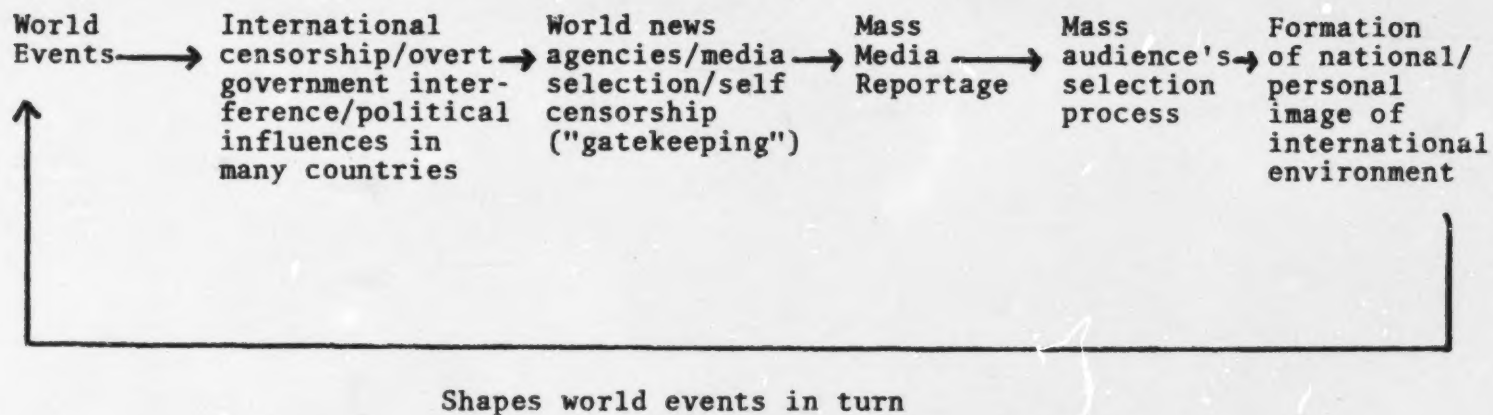
Some communication scholars have content analyzed the international news system in order to discern what images different countries have or

¹⁸

Al. Hester, op. cit., p. 243

¹⁹

Leo Bogart, "Is there a World Opinion?" in Michael H. Prosser (ed.) Intercommunication Among Nations and Peoples (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1973), p. 105.



SCHEMATIC FLOW OF INTERNATIONAL NEWS THROUGH A HYPOTHETICAL
MASS MEDIUM TO A MASS AUDIENCE

tend to create of each other. The Wolfe,²⁰ Merrill,²¹ and Oliphant²² studies, for example, did examine the images of the U.S. in the Latin American and Mexican press. UNESCO, in 1953, sponsored an extensive opinion survey "to bring out into the open for examination the 'pictures' of foreign people and the 'images of the world' in the heads of citizens of nine nations."²³ The importance of such international image studies is two-fold: firstly, they show that national and personal images (concretized through the consistent imbibition of foreign and local news stories) account, to a large extent, for the varied patterns of human reaction to the immediate and international environments, and, secondly, are a fortiori important as they direct our attention to considering new priorities of the international news-gathering patterns. Boulding elaborates their significance somewhat:

. . . we must recognise that people whose decisions determine the policies and actions of nations do not respond to the "objective" facts of the situation whatever they may mean, but to their "image" of the situation. It is what we think the world is like, not what it is really like, that determines our behavior.²⁴

⁰ Wayne Wolfe, "Images of the United States in the Latin American Press," Journalism Quarterly, 41 (1964), pp. 79-86.

²¹ John Calhoun Merrill, "The Image of the United States in Ten Mexican Dailies," Journalism Quarterly, 39:2 (1962), pp. 203-209.

²² C. A. Oliphant, "The Image of the United States Projected by Peking Review," Journalism Quarterly, 41 (1964), pp. 416-20, and p. 469.

³ William Buchanan and Hadley Cantril, How Nations See Each Other (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1953), p. 1.

⁴ Kenneth E. Boulding, "National Images and International Systems," The Journal of Conflict Resolution, 3:2 (June 1959), p. 120.

It is, therefore, in keeping with the growing importance of image studies in international relations and international communication that this paper seeks to examine the performance of selected U.S. magazines apropos of African news and opinion items. It attempts to answer the question: what depth of coverage do the selected magazines have on Africa, and what images do they want their readers to have about that continent?

The Sample Research Design

Three U.S. magazines (Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News and World Report) and three U.S. opinion magazines (The Nation, The New Republic, and the National Review), chosen for their high journalistic standards, and, at least for the news magazines, large circulation, were examined specifically for their African news and opinion items. The year of evaluation -- 1976 -- was purposively chosen for its recency. But the definite period within this year, the week beginning January 19 through the week ending August 21, was less than uniform for all six magazines and was chosen because all the opinion magazines do not have consistent weekly or biweekly publications all year round. The Nation and The New Republic are not published during the first week of January each year. In addition, The Nation is published biweekly in July and August each year while The New Republic was not published on July 10, August 14 and 28, 1976.

The National Review, aside from not being published twice in January, is, in contrast to the other opinion magazines, a fortnightly publication. So, while all the magazines but the National Review were examined from January 19 through May 8, 1976 -- a sixteen-week period -- the study of the National Review was extended

to the week ending August 21 -- also a sixteen-publication period. For a quick grasp of these periods, a sample chart is given on the next page.

Operational Definitions of Key Concepts

Four basic concepts used in this study are: (1) U.S. News and Opinion, (2) Non-U.S. News and Opinion, (3) African News and Opinion, and (4) Miscellaneous News and Opinion. For the purposes of this study, they are operationally defined as follows:

(1) U.S. News and Opinion: News and opinion material exclusively about the United States. These do not include letters-to-the-editor because such items neither represent the views of the editorial staff of the magazines nor are they the direct products of the news-gathering activities of media staffers.

Also, book reviews, by virtue of their diversity of scope and content and the difficulty in ascertaining the directionality of their content, are excluded.

(2) Non-U.S. News and Opinion: Any news or opinion matter on a foreign country, under a foreign dateline or originated in the U.S. but clearly about a foreign country.

(3) African News and Opinion: News and opinion matter on the African continent. Material under an African dateline, pictorial matter (photographs, cartoons, maps, drawings), but excluding book reviews and letters-to-the-editor.

Africa, as used in this study, means the continental land-mass west of the Red Sea and south of the Mediterranean Sea and includes such offshore islands as the British Indian Ocean Territory, Cape Verde Islands, Comoro Islands, Madeira Island, Malagasy Republic,

SAMPLE CHART

<u>Magazine</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Day Published</u>	<u>1976 Sample Period</u>	<u>Circulation^a (All editions)</u>
1. <u>Time</u>	Weekly	Monday	Jan. 19-May 3	4,522,776
2. <u>Newsweek</u>	Weekly	Monday	Jan. 19-May 3	3,012,945
3. <u>U.S. News and World Report</u>	Weekly	Monday	Jan. 19-May 3	2,056,991
4. <u>The Nation</u>	Weekly	Saturday	Jan. 24-May 8	27,000
5. <u>The New Republic</u>	Weekly	Saturday	Jan. 24-May 8	80,545
6. <u>National Review</u>	Biweekly	Friday	Jan. 23-Aug. 20	96,115

^aSource: , '77 Ayer Directory of Publications (Philadelphia: Ayer Press, 1977).

Mauritius, Reunion, St. Helena and dependencies, Sao Tome e Principe, and Seychelles.

(4) Miscellaneous News and Opinion: News and opinion about international organizations -- the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, United Nations Organization, the Commonwealth of Nations, European Economic Community, Organization of African Unity, Organization of American States, and other items that transcend national frontiers, for example, the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, Detente, etc. Since such items concern large, heterogenous geographic areas they cannot be categorized on a single nation basis.

Categories of News and Opinion

There was no need to categorize the content on the basis of news and opinion since such was not the purpose of the study. Rather, magazine material was categorized on the basis of a reformulated and expanded version of categories used by Hachten²⁵ and Wolfe²⁶ in similar studies, and by Ardoin²⁷ and Weaver and Mullins²⁸ in others.

Category A: Conflict -- news/opinion of armed (or at least violent) action in any military operations, guerrilla warfare, and terrorist

25

William Hachten, "The Flow of News and Underdevelopment: A Pilot Study of the African Press," A paper delivered at the Association for Education in Journalism Convention, Iowa City, August 30, 1966, p. 12.

26

Wayne Wolfe, op. cit.

27

Birthe Ardoin, "A Comparison of Newspapers Under Joint Printing Contracts," Journalism Quarterly, 50:2 (Summer 1973), pp. 34-47.

28

David H. Weaver and E. Mullins, "Content and Format Characteristics of Competing Daily Newspapers," Journalism Quarterly, 52:2 (Summer 1975), pp. 257-64.

activities, racism, riots, coups, demonstrations, strikes, crime, and vice.

Category B: Accidents and Disasters -- accidents, fire, natural disasters, deaths, suicides, and other similar occurrences.

Category C: Government Acts and Politics -- foreign relations, defence, public health, social welfare, race relations, and the administration of justice.

Category D: Economic Activity -- agriculture, labor, trade, business, industry, commerce, finance, banking, and the mass media.

Category E: Social Events and Problems -- marriage, divorce, social gathering, philanthropy, and human interest (including personalities, celebrities, beauty contests, and amusements).

Category F: Arts, Culture, and Movies -- culture and cultural entertainment, literature, printing, paintings, drama languages, and museums.

Category G: Sports, games, and other recreational activities.

Category H: Science, medicine, education, religion, and inventions.

Miscellaneous: The above categories are independent and mutually exclusive, but material that was an amalgam of two or more categories was classified as miscellaneous.

Methodology

Content analysis was the method used. All articles, news, and opinion items in all six magazines were read, categorized, and measured. But the system of measurement was not the conventional column

inches method or Press' "word count" system,²⁹ but the square column centimeters unit of analysis, a method warranted by two reasons: (1) there were marked differences in column width sizes among all the magazines, differences that were accentuated and polarized by the "columnless" layout pattern of the U.S. News and World Report on such specialized pages as "Worldgram," "Business Around the World," and "Newsgram," or the "atrophied" columns of the National Review which contain its poems and short verses. Put differently, aside from the variance in width size in all the magazines, there was a lack of rigidity in pattern of space use. Thus a measurement of the different column areas was considered authentic; (2) the gradual change toward the metric system of measurement in most of the world called for an au courant approach to the measurement of depth of coverage, hence square column centimeters.

Regarding non-U.S. news, only two of the six magazines have areas designated for it: Time in "World," and Newsweek in "International." The U.S. News and World Report does not follow a consistently rigid indepth reportorial pattern of coverage, but two news items areas -- "Worldgram" and "Business Around the World" -- carry only international news briefs. The opinion magazines, in sharp contrast, do not compartmentalize their coverage of international opinion items.

29

Harry Press, "Results of a Survey," Nieman Reports (1951), pp. 13-15.

The Findings

The mass media institutions' response to their immediate environment displays heightened sensitivities where their use is pervasive and where there is the availability of economic and social infrastructures to keep them active. Lasswell in the late 1940s suggested three major roles mass communication performs: (1) the surveillance of the environment, (2) the correlation of parts of the society in responding to the environment, and (3) the transmission of social heritage from one generation to the next.³⁰ Wright added a fourth dimension -- entertainment.³¹ It must be added here that these functions are operationally functional of the media systems different countries operate, and must be viewed as such if an undistorted perspective of media functions is to be fully understood and appreciated. White,³² in his so-called "gatekeeper" studies of 1950, and another such study conducted in the late 1960s under the auspices of the RAND Corporation,³³ point to the role played by media personnel in determining what gets printed. However, a basic point of note is that the extent to which media are utilized and the diversity of such utilization are positively correlated with the media systems (that is, authoritarian, libertarian, soviet authoritarian, and social responsibility) operational in different countries.

30

Harold D. Lasswell, "The Structure and Function of Communication in Society," in Lyman Bryson (ed.) The Communication of Ideas (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948), p. 38.

31

Charles Wright, Mass Communication: A Sociological Perspective (New York: Random House, 1975), p. 9.

32

David Manning White, "The 'Gatekeeper': A Case Study in the Selection of News," Journalism Quarterly, 27 (Fall 1950), pp. 383-90.

33

Ben H. Bagdikian, The Information Machines (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 89-91, and 106-10.

Media function in the U.S., for instance, have advanced from simply playing the informational role (in responding to their environment) to responding directly to the social needs of society. But such function, not always discrete, overlap. The social responsibility function of the media -- one of the four-theories typology that drew diatribes from, and modified by Merrill³⁴ and Lowenstein³⁵ -- has had the net effect of bringing media institutions closer to large, heterogenous, and anonymous audiences. While this function represents a vivid departure from the media systems in authoritarian societies, it is of valid significance in those societies where governments allow only a minimum of intervention on the media and where the actualization rather than the pretentiousness of press freedom constitutes the bedrock for the dynamics of the communications industry. The over-all effect of whatever systemic patterns of communications are adopted is translated -- though differentially -- in the nature and volume of news flow into, within, and from an environment.

The U.S. no doubt affords an ample case in point in demonstrating the value of the journalistic tenet that for a news medium to justify its existence, it must, among other things, relate its content to its environment. Consequently, the sample magazines displayed heavy use of their space for U.S. news and opinion items -- Table I.

³⁴

John Calhoun Merrill, The Imperative of Freedom: A Philosophy of Journalistic Autonomy (New York: Hastings House, 1974), pp. 36-43.

³⁵

John Calhoun Merrill and Ralph L. Lowenstein, Media, Messages, and Men: New Perspectives in Communication (New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1971), pp. 185-89.

TABLE I

Comparative Quantities of U.S., Non-U.S., and Miscellaneous News and Opinion
by Number of Items in All Six Magazines

News/Opinion	News Magazines			Opinion Magazines		
	<u>Time</u> (N=601)	<u>Newsweek</u> (N=658)	<u>U.S. News</u> (N=777)	<u>Nation</u> (N=277)	<u>New Rep.</u> (N=146)	<u>Nat. Rev.</u> (N=691)
U.S.	80%	80%	60%	48%	86%	64%
Non-U.S.	18	18	36	14	13	20
Miscellaneous	2	2	4	38	1	16
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Time and Newsweek each had 80% of the news items devoted to internal news while the opinion magazines, in terms of mean proportions, had a slightly lower proportion of their opinion items devoted to the U.S.

On non-U.S. news and opinion, the news magazines were again on the lead with a high of 36 percent and a low of 18 percent. The opinion magazines had lower proportions of their over-all opinion material made up of foreign news matter -- The New Republic had the least number of items (13 percent) in this category.

TABLE II

Relative Quantities of U.S., Non-U.S., and Miscellaneous News and Opinion
in Approximate Square Column Centimeters in Six Magazines

<u>News/Opinion</u>	<u>Time</u> (N=264,204)	<u>Newsweek</u> (N=256,280)	<u>U.S. News</u> (N=392,474)	<u>Nation</u> (N=132,264)	<u>New Republic</u> (N=128,171)	<u>Nat.Rev.</u> (N=142,552)
U.S.	74%	77%	83%	62%	81%	61%
Non-U.S.	23	21	13	21	18	13
Miscellaneous	3	2	4	17	1	26
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

The data presented in Table 11 are consistent with the trend shown in Table 1. By volume of newshole, the difference in the average coverage of U.S. matter between the news and opinion magazines is 10 percent (up from the 7 percent difference in the number of items in Table 1). On non-U.S. opinion items, the National Review, which had the second largest number of items (Table 1), tied with the U.S. News and World Report for least coverage (Table 11). The opinion magazines were also heavily weighted in favor of miscellaneous items.

International news flow is guided by one major factor -- the pecking order or hierarchy of nations -- an even though such a phenomenon does augur ill for relations between nations, little has been done to avert the proclivity of the international media systems being inundated by "Big Power" news. The African continent remains largely unreported, the more so in terms of varied news and opinion briefs. America's leading news and opinion magazines could only devote less than five percent each of their total editorial space in sixteen issues (Table 111) to the continent, with the U.S. News and World Report and The Nation devoting dismally low proportions -- 1.4 percent and 1.2 percent respectively.

In sharp contrast to the trends in Tables 1 and 11, and both in terms of the mean proportions of the total editorial space and of total foreign news space devoted to Africa, the opinion magazines had more coverage (3.06 percent of total editorial space and 20.03 percent of total foreign news space) than the news

TABLE III

Quantity of News and Opinion Matter on Africa in Six U.S. Magazines by Number of Items and Proportion of Newshole in Square Column Centimeters

<u>Magazine</u>	<u>No. of News Opinion Items</u>	<u>Total Af- rican News/ Opinion in Square Column Cm.</u>	<u>% African News/Opinion of Total News/ Opinion space</u>	<u>Total Non-U.S. in Sq. Col. Cm.</u>	<u>% African News/Opin. of Total Foreign News Space</u>
<u>Time</u>	15	7900	2.9%	61178	12.9%
<u>Newsweek</u>	19	9647	3.7%	54719	17.6%
<u>U.S. News</u>	34	5636	1.4%	49567	11.3%
<u>The Nation</u>	4	1610	1.2%	28409	5.6%
<u>New Republic</u>	4	4888	3.8%	23395	20.8%
<u>National Review</u>	23	6114	4.2%	18102	33.7%

magazines (2.6 percent and 13.93 percent respectively). The gloomy picture of low African news coverage is slightly improved when the continent is placed in comparison with other world areas -- Table IV. The news magazines each gave the fifth largest coverage to Africa, while The Nation, The New Republic, and National Review ranked the continent sixth, fourth, and third respectively. Australia and New Zealand had the least coverage.

TABLE IV
Comparison of News and Opinion Matter by Major World Areas in Six Magazines

World Area	<u>Time</u> (N=264204) ^a	<u>Newsweek</u> (N=256280) ^a	<u>U.S. News</u> (N=392472) ^a	<u>The Nation</u> (N=132264) ^a	<u>New Repub.</u> (N=128171) ^a	<u>Nat. Rev.</u> (N=142552) ^a
1. Western Europe	6.0%	5.0%	3.0%	3.0%	6.7%	5.4%
2. Eastern Europe and the U.S.S.R.	0.7	1.8	1.4	1.2	1.97	-
3. Middle East	5.4	5.7	3.2	2.6	4.03	0.2
4. Asia (excluding 2 & 3)	6.0	4.0	2.0	7.4	0.7	2.0
5. Canada	0.1	0.2	0.3	-	-	0.3
6. Australia & New Zealand	-	-	0.1	-	-	-
7. U.S.A.	74.0	76.6	83.3	62.0	80.9	61.2
8. Mexico, Central & South America and the Caribbean	2.0	1.0	1.3	6.2	1.2	0.6
9. Africa	2.9	3.7	1.4	1.2	3.8	4.2
10. Miscellaneous ^b	2.6	2.0	4.0	16.4	0.7	26.0
TOTAL	99.7	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.9

^aTotal U.S., Non-U.S., and Miscellaneous News/Opinion in square column centimeters.

^bInternational Organizations, multinational and multi-territorial items (excluding Africa).

Categories of News and Opinion: What Image of Africa?

Detailed analysis of the predominant categories of magazine content would readily provide the framework within which useful insights into the projected image of the continent may be derived.

Table V shows a concentration in Category A and a complete neglect of Categories E through H. Although it is preposterous to infer that Africa has nothing else newsworthy but conflicts (Category A) to offer, it is impossible to expect that a continent just sowing the seeds of development and mustering its strength for a revolutionary revamping of its socio-economic and political structures can do so to the total exclusion of worthwhile social events and the arts. However, the tendency was to concentrate on those scary issues which, in the opinion of reporters, would au fond satisfy reader demands. A majority of the countries reported (Table VI) were, in the main, trouble spots. Angola, for example, which recorded consistently high coverage, had been enmeshed in a series of political and military imbroglios in her strides for political self-identity, inter-ethnic group harmony, and socio-economic maturity. The situations in the Republic of South Africa, Rhodesia, and Nigeria had been no less different.

Only the news magazines reported any stories on Nigeria about Time headlined "Penny-Ante Putsch,"³⁶ and "Festival of Death,"³⁷

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Time, March 1, 1976, p. 27.

³⁷

Time, March 22, 1976, pp. 32 and 35.

and Newsweek headlined "Nigeria: Coup No. 4,"³⁸ and "Drumhead Justice,"³⁹ all in reference to attempts by dissident groups within the Nigerian army to oust the regime of Nigeria's strongman, the late General Murtala Mohammed, and the subsequent public executions of coup plotters. It is thus quite clear that such pattern of coverage of turbulent news validates Galtung and Ruge's hypothesis on the structure of foreign news:

The lower the rank of the nation, the more negative will the news from that nation have to be. In other words when something positive and good is happening it will have to be located in the high ranking nation -- from the underdog nations of the world, typically, news reports will be overwhelmingly negative. . . . The thesis is that positive things that happen in the underdog countries will go under-reported and this will promote an image of those countries as being unable to govern themselves, and so inherently inferior to the top-dog countries.

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The reportage of periodic outburst of coups and counter coups, coupled with the coverage of the African revelry in incessant public executions -- festivals of death? -- give the impression of a savage, barbaric, and grotesque people inhabiting the continent. It also shows that although there has been much publicity about modernism on the continent certain sectors still rightly belong

³⁸ Newsweek, February 23, 1976, p. 41.

³⁹ Newsweek, March 22, 1976, p. 37.

⁴⁰ Johan Galtung and Mari Hulmboe Ruge, "The Structure of Foreign News," Journal of Peace Research, 1 (1965), p. 83.

TABLE V
Proportion of African News and Opinion Material in Six U.S. Magazines
by Categorized Subject Matter

CATEGORIES	Time		Newsweek		U.S. News		The Nation		New Republic		National Review	
	News Item	% of Newshole	News Item	% of Newshole	News Item	% of Newshole	News Item	% of Newshole	News Item	% of Newshole	News Item	% of Newshole
	(N=15)	(N=7900) ^a	(N=19)	(N=9647) ^a	(N=34)	(N=5636) ^a	(N=4)	(N=1610) ^a	(N=4)	(N=4888) ^a	(N=23)	(N=6114) ^a
A	86%	93%	84%	91%	70%	75%	25%	52%	75%	85%	57%	66%
B	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	1
C	7	4	11	8	18	22	75	48	25	15	39	33
D	7	3	5	1	12	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
E												
F												
G												
H												
Misc.												
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

^aIn square column centimeters.

CATEGORIES:

A - Conflict
B - Accidents and Disasters
C - Government Acts and Politics
D - Social Events and Problems

E - Social Events and Problems
F - Arts, Culture, and Movies
G - Sports
H - Science, medicine, education, etc.
Misc - (Two or more of the above)

TABLE VI

Proportion of Approximate Square Column Centimeters of African News and Opinion Material in Six Magazines by Countries/Geographical Area.

COUNTRIES	<u>Time</u> (N=7900)	<u>Newsweek</u> (N=9647)	<u>U.S. News</u> (N=5636)	<u>Nation</u> (N=1610)	<u>New Rep.</u> (N=4888)	<u>Nat. Rev.</u> (N=6114)
Angola	61.4%	23.3%	27%	52.4%	68.2%	26%
Djibouti	-	-	9.7	-	-	-
Mozambique	2.7	-	-	-	-	0.2
Nigeria	2.7	3.2	1.6	-	-	-
Rhodesia	12.2	34.0	-	-	-	22.8
Spanish Sahara	-	15.7	-	-	16.8	-
South Africa	1.7	-	8.6	-	-	17.0
Uganda	-	-	-	-	-	9.0
Zaire	-	-	-	-	15.0	-
Miscellaneous ^a	19.3	23.8	53.1	47.6	-	25.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

^aInternational Organizations and multi-national items.

to the primeval era -- "Drumhead Justice,"⁴¹ for instance.

Djibouti (formerly the French territory of Afars and Issas) surfaced twice in the U.S. News and World Report. But in what contexts? The first report, headlined "Djibouti: Next African Hot Spot?" had as its lead paragraph: "A look at the map in the adjoining column helps explain why little-known Djibouti is strategically important -- and why it may become the next territory up for grabs in Africa."⁴² The second news item reported the logistics peculiar to that territory. The nature of this abrupt reportorial style does give a "picture" of an unstable, even unprotected, continent whose significance lies in providing excellent opportunities for military strategists and for political maneuvering. It also shows the extent of its fragility and vulnerability to intracontinental and external adversaries and allies alike.

Africa is not simply portrayed as politically gullible, naive, and immature, but also as a continent whose course of action is precariously dependent on the "big masters." As a conflict-ridden continent, it provides a good chessboard for flexing diplomatic muscle by the world's super powers -- notably the U.S. and the Soviet Union. In an answer to the questions: ". . . is it any of our business what happens in foreign parts? Do we have the duty or need or right to intervene?" James Burn-

⁴¹ Newsweek, op. cit.

⁴² U. S. News and World Report, February 23, 1976, p. 38.

ham, an editor of the National Review made a strong case for a decisive U.S. involvement in Angola:

Everyone with even the most modest expertise in geopolitics and strategy understands that the present struggle in Angola closely affects U.S. security (and therefore U.S. national interests); for professional strategists, that proposition is too obvious for debate. . . . They know that the Soviets' Angolan thrust confirms and reinforces the offensive communist momentum in relation to the cumulative defensive fallback of the Western side.

. . . It follows that it is to our national interest that other nations should be so governed as to favor, or at least not negate our needs of security, access to resources, trade, and the freedom of movement of persons and ideas. . . .⁴³

Two weeks earlier, the National Review questioned the reluctance on the part of the U.S. to become involved in Angola. It asked: "Have we really adopted, in practice, the policy that we will not interfere with Soviet aggression anywhere in the world? But surely even Congress must agree that the line must be drawn somewhere. Where, then, gentlemen, do you propose to draw it?"⁴⁴ It is apparent from this quote that the political cum military jigsaw puzzle has to be fitted together by the combined efforts of the Soviets and the Americans for goals more meaningful to these powers, and, assuredly, to the detriment of the baby nations of Africa.

The National Review, once again, in bolstering its offensive on a murky and ambivalent American policy toward Africa published two

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"Angola: The National Disinterest," National Review, February 6, 1976, p. 80.

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National Review, February 20, 1976, p. 136.

satirical perspectives in short verses:

Our African Policy

Someday (it may be coming soon)
 South Africans will face High Noon
 With backs against the Southern Sea
 They'll battle with catastrophe
 Until, from Cairo to the Cape,
 They understand there's no escape
 Then will the Russian fleet sail down
 To claim the base at Simonstown,
 While tankers make their nervous way
 With petrol for the U.S.A.?

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Aside from giving a "picture" of a continent comprised of Communist and non-Communist "dominoes," it further showed the limits and abysmally low capabilities of indigenous African leadership in coming to grips with its problems. The helplessness of African leadership is further borne out by another verse lampooning Senator Hubert Humphrey's attitude toward Angola:

Humphrey On Angola

He'd rather not discuss the threats
 Lobbed over by the Soviets
 Just thinking of "a new Vietnam"
 Plays havoc with his diaphragm
 He'd simply let Mobutu stew
 "Let's give a damn about our Sioux!"
 But marching on Pretoria
 Produces sheer euphoria.⁴⁶

Zaire, an ally of the U.S. over the past 16 years, has attracted massive American investments -- estimated at \$1 billion -- especially in the copper-rich Shaba (Katanga) province. But, in the view of The New Republic, that country's President is outrageously dictato-

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National Review, April 16, 1976, p. 376.

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National Review, January 23, 1976, p. 23.

rial and corrupt, but the alignment must continue:

. . . the Zaire crisis is rapidly entering an acute stage, a fact that may not yet be fully appreciated at the highest levels in the White House and the State Department (though working-level Africanists in the State Department are quite aware of it). The official policy thus provides for total support of Mobutu. The reason, of course, is that Zaire is considered to be of immense importance for the stability of Africa, even more so than Angola, and that the administration believes vital American interests are engaged in keeping Kinshasa in the Western camp.

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One wonders why an ally of the U.S. is considered by The New Republic as strategically more crucial to the stability of the continent than the Soviet-backed Luanda government of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Angola. Also, why is Zaire seen as providing the ambience for projecting that goal? Is the raison d'être for such a view consequent upon the likelihood of the U.S. achieving continental influence by "protecting" that country? Currently illustrative of the "protectionist" goals of America's foreign policy is the open criticism of Brazil on human rights, while at the same time rushing emergency aid -- 15 million dollars worth of nonlethal support -- to Zaire even though it is very well known that the latter's records on civil rights are just as bizarre as those of Brazil.

Underscoring the political naiveté and impuissance of the continent's leadership and the hazardous impact of the imbibition of foreign ideologies, Time reported that the January, 1976 Organization

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The New Republic, February 21, 1976, p. 5.

of African Unity emergency summit meeting was deadlocked from its opening moments. The Organization, characteristically belying its grand title, saw its summit meeting split into two camps -- one backing the Soviet-sponsored government in Angola, the other, representing the non-Communist bloc, opposing.⁴⁸ The disunity among these nations is in line with the conflicting ideologies at play in the continent. Time had earlier called for a reduction of Moscow's influence in Angola, thereby affirming America's uneasiness about the Kremlin's ideological grip on the continent.

As a continent bedeviled by an incertitude about its political future, the National Review summarized the aspirations of the super-powers in these terms:

The postwar decolonization of northern, central, and part of southern Africa did not mean a total withdrawal of the advanced nations from Africa but simply a change in the form of their presence. The native post-colonial regimes were and are, in any case, incapable of managing their development on their own. The advanced Western nations, along, nowadays, with the Soviet Union and China, continue to seek economic and strategic advantages in Africa in neo-colonial forms.

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So, we see a continent struggling against enormous political odds on the one hand, and socio-economic problems on the other. The former are the result of inchoate political ideologies and a consequence of colonial happenstances. There is no question that foreign influences have cut deep inroads into the political fabric of Africa's young

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Time, January 26, 1976, p. 35.

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National Review; July 23, 1976, p. 776.

nations which, as vestiges of colonialism, make their acclaimed independence a mirage. And, as if to reaffirm the needy situation in black Africa particularly, U.S. News and World Report's correspondent in Nairobi cabled a report which concluded in part:

. . . The black continent has heard from the Russians and the Chinese how these two communist powers feel about the conflict in Southern Africa. Now the Africans want to hear what the U.S. has to say.

The problem is that the Communists deal in revolt and disorder, and that makes them popular with Africans. The Americans talk in terms of a peaceful solution, and most Africans now believe that is an impossibility.

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A final dimension of Africa's image could be deduced from the so-much-but-too-little type of coverage that discernibly characterized the play given the continent by the sample magazines. Africa is comprised of 58 nations and territories, yet less than one-fifth of these get any form of attention in America's leading news and opinion magazines, and of those that do, there is the parochialism in the type of events covered. So, there exists the nagging temptation to view the continent "holistically" (that is, through the "window" of a few "popular" nations) rather than "atomistically" (that is, through being cognizant of a continental landmass made up of fifty or more nations that engage in activities other than basking in conflicts and cataclysmic events).

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U.S. News and World Report, May 3, 1976, p. 30.

Conclusions

On an over-all basis, the contextual treatment of Africa by the sample magazines shows more similarities than differences. The major difference is the forthright position characteristically taken by the opinion magazines in calling for a firm U.S. policy in Africa as a worthwhile approach in checking the pervasiveness of Communist gains. Nonetheless, all the magazines tend to promote the interests of the U.S. and project Africa as a diseased nursing baby struggling against a cornucopia of political, social, and economic problems. As a baby continent, its future is umbilically tied to the dictates of the high-rank nations.

The significance of any image nations have of each other is translated into reality when they shape the next phase of their foreign policies. It plays key roles in establishing the tempo of relations between nations. As Lipson pointed out:

Despite the gradual relaxation of the cold-war imagery, those symbols remain powerful and evocative. They continue to inform United States policy throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America. They remain critical in shaping the foreign policy agenda as well.

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The miniscule coverage of Africa, both in terms of depth and typology, and the emphasis of the latter on violence, portray the continent negatively. It is true that it is plagued by a desta-

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Charles Lipson, "Angola and the Memory of Vietnam," The Nation, April 17, 1976, p. 458.

bilizing wave of crisis. Also true is its dirt-poor characteristic. But it is indeed disheartening to observe media staffers' rationalization of a Pavlovian response to turbulent news on the basis of its "newsworthiness" and that it "satisfies" audience demands.

One primary reason advanced to explain away low attention to Africa is the decline in the number of foreign correspondents on the services of the American mass media. A 1975 study for the Overseas Press Club of America showed a pale picture of the situation. In capsule summary, there were only 676 full-time staff, representing a 16 percent drop from the 1972 total of 797, and a 28 percent drop since a 1969 study. Distributionally, 50 percent were in Europe, 25 percent in Asia, 15 percent in the western hemisphere, 8 percent in the Middle East and 2 percent in Africa. The latter figure was subsumed as follows: Ethiopia 1, Nigeria 2, Republic of South Africa 4, and Kenya 8.⁵² In addition, this small number of correspondents had had their journalistic ventures constrained by an enormity of problems: government censorship and reluctance to issue permits, poor infrastructural base, hostile reaction from interviewees, and the uncooperativeness of indigenous media establishments. Kliesch noted the magnitude of the dilemma, and, his remark, because of its significance, will be quoted in extenso:

Despite its size, some three times that of the United States, Africa continues to get only token coverage from American news media. In all of Africa, full-time correspondents were reported in only four countries: Kenya (with more than half

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Ralph E. Kliesch, "A Vanishing Species: The American Newsmen Abroad," Overseas Press Club of America (New York: Overseas Press Club, 1975) p. 18 and passim.

the entire African count), Nigeria, and Ethiopia, all in tropical Africa, and the Republic of South Africa in the lower continent. Outside the Middle East, no full-time correspondents were reported for Arab Africa. Thus news from Africa suffers not only from being the product of 2% of the full-time press corps (and 3% of the American correspondents), but also from the fact that the limited staffing is maldistributed.

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The need to come to grips with a dwindling overseas press corps is somewhat countered by the current economic problems facing the media industry the world over. This notwithstanding, a scheme aimed at arresting the downtrend in their numbers would be worth the cost; this is underlined by a study on the impacts such staffs have on the level of coverage of foreign news. It compared the foreign news content of two sets of newspapers -- one with, the other without, overseas staff -- and found that the newspapers with foreign staffs had more (1) foreign news stories of greater mean length, (2) specific sources of foreign news, and (3) "hard" news.⁵⁴ The illuminating relevance of these findings is that the extent of coverage of foreign news was correlated with the availability and use of foreign correspondents. While an increase in the number and distribution of overseas staffs will alleviate the scarcity of reported international news, a redefinition of the ethics of international news reporting to include currently sidetracked areas will, indisputably, reduce the volume of violent news while simultaneously

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Ibid., p. 110.

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John B. Adams, "What the Foreign Correspondent Does for a Newspaper's Readers," Journalism Quarterly, 43:2 (1966), pp. 300-13.

stimulating new readership interests. After all, such international news stories, their political and ideological coloration aside, have immense values for their consumers. Smith found, for example, that although his respondents who frequently listen to the stations in the Communist orbit view these broadcasts as "propaganda," "one-sided," and containing many "half-truths," they are useful in (1) making them aware of what other countries are thinking about the United States, (2) giving them additional information about world affairs, and (3) telling them the other side of the story.⁵⁵

Ideally, then, the content of the international news media should more closely reflect the multiple realities of a complex world in an era when advances in communications have created new interdependencies, when cooperation among nations is increasingly becoming a sine qua non, and when the news systems are wielding colossal and far-reaching influences on all dimensions of international affairs.

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Don D. Smith, "America's Short-Wave Audience: Twenty Five Years Later," Public Opinion Quarterly, 33:4 (Winter 1969-70), p. 545. See also: Don D. Smith, "Is There a U.S. Audience for International Broadcasts?" Journalism Quarterly, 39:1 (Winter 1962), pp. 86-7; Don D. Smith, "The U.S. Audience for International Broadcasts," Journalism Quarterly, 47:2 (Summer 1970), pp. 364-66.

SAMPLE CODE SHEET

Magazine Title: _____

Date: _____

Geographic Area/Country: _____

CATEGORIES

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	Misc.	Total
Item Number										
Vol. Sq. Cm.										
Item Number										
Vol. Sq. Cm.										
Item Number										
Vol. Sq. Cm.										